

Science Education Initiative



National Institute
on Minority Health
and Health Disparities

Program Description

The **Science Education Initiative (SEI)** is designed to encourage students from health disparity populations to seek careers in the biomedical, behavioral, clinical, and social sciences. In addition to an outreach component, the initiative provides educational, mentoring, and career development programs for individuals ranging from kindergarten through the postdoctoral level.

NIMHD has a long history of encouraging underrepresented youth to study the sciences, from coordinating the NIH Minority Summer Internship Program to participating in the National Youth Initiative Program. SEI expands on this tradition by offering a comprehensive approach to increase the participation of individuals from health disparity populations in scientific fields. For this initiative, NIMHD provides as much as \$350,000 in annual funding for up to 5 years.

Goals

- Improve the knowledge and experience of K–12 science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) teachers
- Encourage high school students from health disparity populations to pursue careers in the health and science fields
- Support the career development of undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral or early-stage investigators interested in health disparities research and biomedical science
- Increase health literacy in underserved populations

Additional Information

While SEI funds five types of research education programs, institutions may only apply for one. Program types include the following:

- The **K–12 Science Education Initiative** seeks to strengthen instruction in elementary, middle, and high schools by increasing the number of science teachers and enhancing student understanding of STEM. Supported programs extend scientific curricula, create professional growth programs and research opportunities for K–12 science teachers, or encourage thoughtful ways of communicating STEM subjects to students.
- The **National High School Youth Summer Initiative** equips high school students with the skills needed to pursue college degrees in STEM disciplines, fostering leadership and introducing youth to role models in the health and science fields. Applicant institutions must have an established alliance with at least one health or scientific organization and previous success working with the organization toward similar goals. Partner organizations may include private businesses, foundations, federal and nonfederal agencies, and college faculties.
- The **Mentoring and Career Development Initiative** provides seminars, symposia, internships, and other programs for undergraduate and graduate students interested in advanced degrees in biomedical, behavioral, and clinical sciences. Students receive valuable research experience and interact with faculty mentors who introduce them to careers in health disparities research and biomedical science.

- The **Health Professions Research Capacity-Building Initiative** supports continued and comprehensive development, education, and research training for postdoctoral professionals, non-tenured early-stage investigators, and junior faculty in health disparities research areas. Applicants must have a significant number of seasoned faculty members to mentor program participants, and applications should detail the process by which junior researchers and mentors will be matched.
- The **Outreach and Information Dissemination Initiative** aims to increase health literacy in underserved populations by creating culturally appropriate health communication messages. Applicants should present plans to increase minority awareness and understanding of health disparity conditions. Strategies might consider language appropriateness, health literacy, cultural relativism, and cultural competence.

Eligibility

Institutions of higher education; nonprofit institutions; small businesses and other for-profit organizations; state, county, and local governments; faith-based and community-based organizations; and public housing authorities may apply. Institutions with current NIH research training support may also apply as long as the proposed educational experiences are distinct from those already receiving funding.

Foreign organizations are not eligible, and NIMHD does not work directly with students interested in SEI. For more information, students should contact the programs funded by the initiative directly.

Program Contacts

Dr. Shelia A. McClure
mcclursh@mail.nih.gov

Dr. DeLoris Hunter
hunterd2@mail.nih.gov

